

We missed very much the presence of Mission Trip visitors in the past few months! Not only because we always enjoy their presence and friendship, but also because they are a very important part of our COPs programmes, which are especially interesting for children during their Summer holidays. For us not having visitors meant we did not have the much needed volunteers for the work - we always much prefer to have volunteers involved, as we wouldn't want kids to only have fun with us! Or of us...? Yeah, volunteers are needed!

Of course, this year was not so great anyway, as we couldn't organise our regular meetings with children. We respected the legal restrictions and then of course, the parents' concerns as well, as there is no way a group of kids will stay put and wear a mask for two or three hours, while so many exciting things are presented to them! Such a shame!

In the same time, I know children missed us too. We recently visited a family in one of the communities we promised we'll do some COPs in 2020 and the kids there jumped on us immediately, questioning us when will we do what it was promised. That was, because Summer was almost gone and they kept waiting and hoping... What could we say? Only that when it will be possible, we'll go there and stay longer...

We feel like there is so much to be disappointed with in 2020, but also there are some things we can be thankful for. While nothing can replace the direct interaction with people, we were all forced into exploring the "on-line" alternative and maybe we will need to consider what can be done in that direction too, if the present restrictions will stay in place for a long time. Whatever happens, we just need to continue trying whatever works in order to still present children with the great love of our God! This is worth all the efforts!



## Outreach Project Newsletter

*Thank you for being a supporter of the Outreach Project. Your support is very important and enables us to continue our work among people. Through these programmes we want to bring the best hope there is to all people. That is Christ! Thank you very much!*

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## Outreach Project Newsletter

### Autumn-Winter 2020



**Outreach** is the heart of why The Smiles Foundation exists. Our primary purpose for doing all we do is to share the truth of an all-loving God, who sent His Son to die and provide each and every one of us, the opportunity for eternal life.

It is true to say, throughout the many years of Smiles work, outreach has been a fundamental factor in what we do and how we do it. But it is also true to say, where we originally focused on Family Care, social aspects took priority. Where we focused on the School, education took priority and Outreach was included where possible.

As a result of a strategic review we have been working on throughout 2020, as we develop the Smiles path for future activities, Outreach and the Gospel message will take priority in all we do.

We have always seen wonderful results of our commitment to Outreach, and recently this was evident in a Baptismal Service at our Emergency Housing Unit and a significant increase of children attending our Tileagd Community Church. Both absolutely thrilling and a testimony to God's Hand of Blessing on everything we do.

**Kevin Hoy,**  
**Founder and Chief Executive**  
**The Smiles Foundation**

We are so happy to see that the word of God is as powerful as always and there are people touched and convinced by the Holy Spirit of their need for Salvation! In **Mierlau** some of our beneficiaries, who we have known for many years, decided to take the major decision for their present and eternal future!

Mugurel, Simona and Ramona want to follow Christ all their lives and they are determined to have a good testimony among people, as this is the way they want to thank God for giving them eternal life. We are thankful to God for them and invite you to read some of their testimony on the next page.





Many of you will know Ramona and her son Denis very well, as they received our support for many years and were helped under several of our projects. Their history is about poverty, lack of hope, domestic violence, homelessness, despair and often about wrong choices. But that slowly stopped being the case a few years back, when they became Smiles' beneficiaries.

We first met them in Salard, when Denis was two months old. At the time, his father used to live with them, but then, soon after they received a container from Smiles to live in, he took some wrong turns. He ended up in the prison, while Ramona and Denis moved into the city, where they only succeeded to find themselves on the streets.



We took them in the Homeless Container Village, where they lived for a few years and after that they moved in Mierlau, in Smiles Shelter, since 2018, where they integrated very well and their lives were so much calmer.

Through all of these, Ramona had her ups and downs, but she was always receptive to learn about God's love for her and her family. She was keen on finding out more each time our pastor would visit her, and eventually in February this year she decided she wants to be baptised, to become a follower of Christ.

We asked her what was her motivation. She told us: "I learnt about Jesus love for me and I want to become a good person. I want to give up on bad things, on bad thoughts, on bad habits and on lies! I think Jesus would not like

me to keep doing these things anymore!". We take this as a testimony - and we sure hope that Ramona will continue to grow in her walk with the Lord; Pastor Vasile, as we all, will continue to help and to guide her, so that her desire to do good for God will continue to increase even more! So, please continue to pray for Ramona and Denis and their future!

It feels like only a few weeks ago we were all present in Dezna, for the Grand Opening of the Outreach Centre. A wonderful place designed and destined to accommodate youth, children, families who will be exposed to the Word of God, either through the camps or any other form of gathering! We all had high hopes for 2020 and were sincerely convinced that the place will be buzzing with activities and fun!



The almighty God decided otherwise though and all this Summer season of 2020 we couldn't even try to organize camps or anything, as the restrictions were very severe and we had to cancel all that was scheduled, as well as abandon hope for new interest before the school started again.

Through God's grace and your support, there was still something very special going on, and that was the addition of new equipment and installation for heating system, which now makes the Centre an option also for the winter months! Yes, we are still under the restrictions and we do not know when a return to initial plans will be possible, but we want to say thank you for making this possible, so that once we are back at it, we have the place available all around the year. This means that we are not limited to organising summer-camps, but suddenly "winter-camps" which sound like a great concept for the future!



On more than one occasion we understood through this summer that outreach means much more than only organising events - which, obviously, can always be delayed or completely cancelled, without knowing when they'll be back.

The very practical things like visiting people - even though briefly and keeping a safe distance - and taking them something was a great way to remind them about God's love, despite the harsh reality which would make anyone think God has abandoned us and does not care what happens to us!

Then, in places like Rapa, Tileagd or Mierlau, providing a hot lunch for people that might otherwise skip one or two meals a day is a very immediate and concrete way to talk about the fact that God did not forget and He does not enjoy allowing us through tough times! Then it is also easier to understand...

We are happy we have the opportunity to do something for someone, daily, as that can be as powerful as a good sermon!